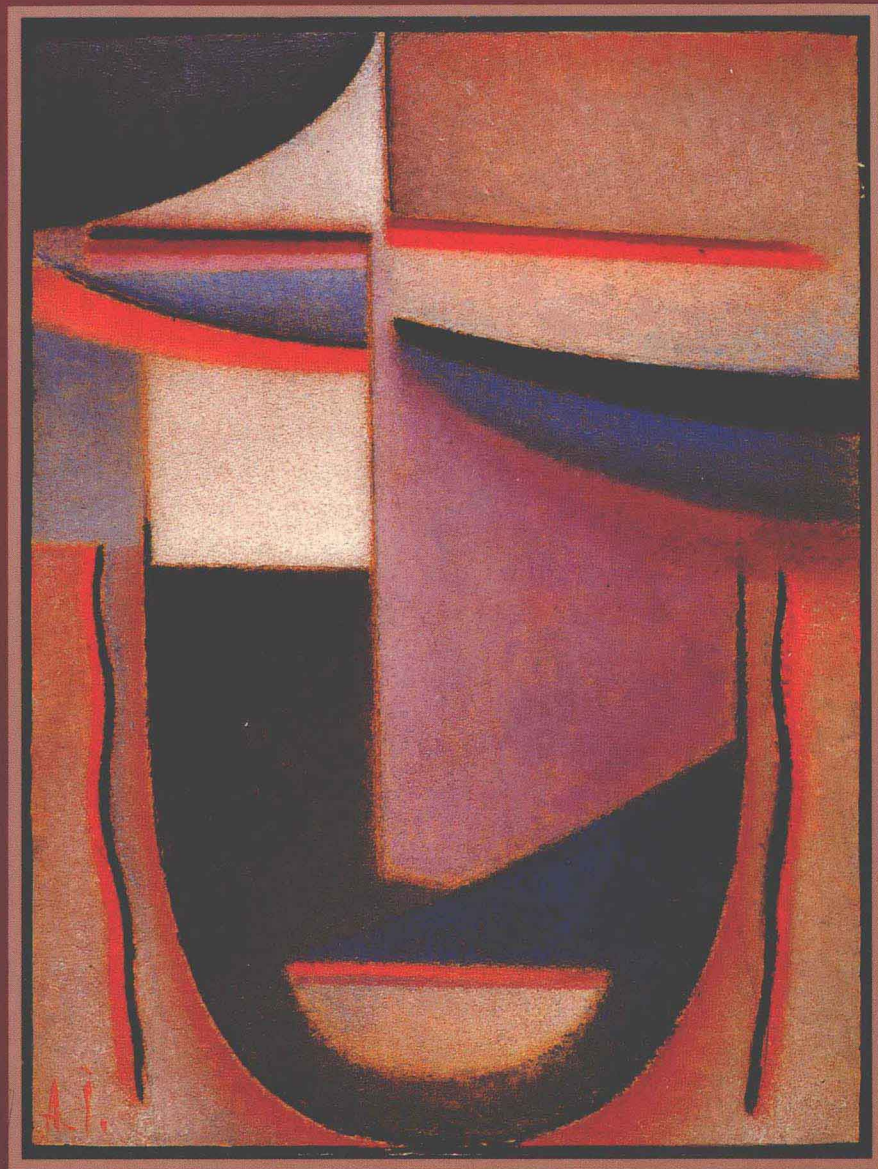


FIFTH EDITION

# COMMUNICATING



Anita Taylor / Arthur Meyer

Teresa Rosegrant / B. Thomas Samples

# Communicating

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FIFTH EDITION

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# Preface

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To both students and teachers who will use this book: Be assured that in this new edition we have done our best to preserve the best quality of the earlier book—its practicality. Our aim in rewriting has been to take out what wasn't useful, to expand what was too brief to be helpful, and to update. The basic elements of this text remain. It has one basic purpose—to help people communicate more effectively *in their daily lives*. To accomplish that purpose, we include explanations of certain basic communication principles and suggestions for applying those principles to the situations people commonly experience.

In more than 75 years of teaching, the combined experience of those of us who wrote this book have taught us important lessons. To use Carl Rogers's term, perhaps the most significant learning we have gained from our students is that knowledge without application seems useless, while application without knowledge too often results in shallow, ineffective, or even destructive communication. Thus we have tried to provide knowledge in introducing the principles of communication and to show how the principles can be applied in everyday living. We have tried always to keep in mind the question: *How can this information be used?*

In response to suggestions from those who used earlier editions, we have retained our expanded treatment of public speaking and the simplified treatment of intrapersonal communication. This most recent edition involves four significant changes: (1) we have added a concrete formula for incorporating active listening and appropriate feedback into a process for coping with conflict; (2) we have incorporated throughout what has recently been learned about the effects of gender and culture in communication; (3) we have updated the material in our chapter on communicating at work for better fit with the modern work environment; and (4) we have added the latest findings on the effects of mass communication in modern life to the final chapter.

Because the book is still intended primarily to be useful in students' daily lives, we've retained our unique treatment of work and family communication, while amplifying aspects of group communication, listening, conflict management, and persuasion.

Throughout this book are many learning aids, based on beliefs we have about teaching. Two of these are especially important. First, we believe people learn best from experience. Only with experience do people really internalize their understandings. Thus, for many important concepts, we've included exercises or suggested experiences. Some of these exercises are for students to do by themselves; others are to be shared with classmates; some guided by the instructor; some completely independent. All are intended to help students experience the ideas discussed, and thus to understand how to use the concepts more effectively.

More experiences are suggested than any one person or class could use. The choices will enable students and instructors to concentrate on their own interests

and needs. Part of these exercises are included in the *Instructor's Manual*. Also available are forms and directions that allow the option of self-paced learning and individualized study of speech communication. Students and teachers may combine these materials with the text, allowing students to design their own course and set their own goals and timetables. If these activities are combined with a contract approach, instructors and students have great flexibility within a well-structured sequence of studies. Some students who followed these guides have finished the course in three weeks; others took two full semesters to get done. Such an approach allows great independence to those who choose to use it. Anyone interested in self-pacing should contact Anita Taylor.

A second belief upon which the book is based is that people learn best when they know what they're trying to learn. Thus, for each chapter we've identified a goal and listed the objectives students should be able to accomplish by reading the material and doing the exercises. These objectives are also guides to testing. If students think they cannot do the stated objectives after reading the text, they can use the objectives to decide what else they need to study. Similarly, each exercise has an objective so students can know why they are doing each exercise.

We wish we could share with you the names of those to whom we owe credit for this book. Persons quoted directly are cited at the appropriate places, but otherwise all the names cannot be listed. Too many people helped us. We owe much to our sensitive, perceptive editors, and to a good production and design team. We are also indebted to critical and thoughtful reviewers for this and previous editions (including Rudolf Busby, San Francisco, California; Marjorie Esco, Broward Community College; Beth McRae, Valdosta State College; Lois Self, Northern Illinois University; Betty Jo Welch, University of North Carolina; and Joan Aitken, University of Missouri at Kansas City). To friends and colleagues, to several proofreaders, to tireless and devoted secretaries, to teachers we've had and authors we've read, our sincere thanks. We owe so very much to our best friends—our families—who shared with us the ordeals of writing, rewriting, editing, re-editing, and authors' disagreements with each other. But perhaps we owe the most of all to people really too numerous to mention, those thousands of students who taught us how to teach—for never have we left a classroom without learning from those we met there. To all of our students we are in debt. To all of them, this book is dedicated.

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# 1 Relating to Your World: Communication

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Man has developed only two methods for settling differences—to shoot it out, or talk it out. Both require skill. Both require discipline. Both require training. If a society wants to become free, or to remain free, it must develop leaders who have skill, discipline, and training in how to talk it out.

WILLIAM NORWOOD BRIGANCE

If all my talents and powers were to be taken from me by some inscrutable Providence, and I had my choice of keeping but one, I would unhesitatingly ask to be allowed to keep the Power of Speaking, for through it, I would quickly recover all the rest.

DANIEL WEBSTER

All epoch-making revolutionary events have been produced not by the written but by the spoken word.

ADOLPH HITLER

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## GOAL

To understand why it is useful to see communication as process

## OBJECTIVES

The material in this chapter should help you to:

1. Explain the significance of referring to communication as a process rather than an act.
2. Distinguish among intended messages, perceived messages, and message carriers.
3. Distinguish between responses and feedback.
4. Explain why participants in communication are both source and receiver at the same time.
5. Create a model that illustrates the impact of the various elements and processes of communication. The model should include:

Source	Messages	Sending
Receiver	Responses	Receiving
Sensory receptors	Feedback	Perceiving
Message carriers	Situation	Interpreting
6. Be able to explain your personal communication model so that listeners will understand how it represents the process view of communication.
7. Cite personal experiences that illustrate each of the factors that cause perception to vary.
8. Define:

Intrapersonal communication	Public communication
Interpersonal communication	Mass communication

Communication is the primary activity that determines the quality of our lives. Most of the time, most of us communicate well enough. Usually when we order a hamburger, that's what we get. But too often we don't communicate as well as we want to or could. Consider the following situations:

*Scene:* Two office workers on coffee break.

*Chris:* Boy, this city is certainly going to the dogs!

*Pat:* Then why don't you move somewhere else?

*Chris:* Why should I?

*Pat:* Didn't you just say you were fed up with this place?

*Chris:* No, I said that it was going to the dogs!

*Pat:* As far as I'm concerned, it means that you don't like it here. It sure doesn't mean that you're happy here, does it?

*Chris:* Listen, you, why don't you mind your own damn business!

*Pat:* Now hold on there, I didn't start this conversation—you did. If you didn't want my opinion, you should have just kept your mouth shut.

*Scene:* A parent and a teenager at dinner.

*Teen:* Hey, may I use the car tonight?

*Parent:* Well, I don't know; it's a school night.

*Teen:* Aw, come on. It's early. The whole gang is going to the drive-in tonight.

*Parent:* I don't know. Don't you have homework?

*Teen:* Naw, got it all done.

*Parent:* Are you sure? Your grades haven't been too good lately. I don't think you're concentrating enough on school these days. That crowd you've been hanging around with isn't a very good influence on you.

*Teen:* You're always bitching, running me down. Why don't you get off my back? My grades are *my* business. Anyway, I can't remember the last time I saw *you* read a book!

What happened in these situations? What do they have in common? In each, the listeners received messages different from those the senders intended. As a result, both were angry and upset. All of us could give examples like this from our own experiences. Yet few of us want such things to happen. And that's why we wrote this book—because so many people want to communicate better than they do now. The ideas presented here can help you avoid the kinds of outcomes—anger and frustration—that the examples show. By applying these principles in your daily life, you can learn to communicate more effectively.

Please understand, though, this isn't a "cookbook." It has no simple recipes, no formulas that will suddenly make you a superstar communicator. No one avoids occasional misunderstandings. But principles exist that if you learn to apply, you can improve your skills at communicating.

These principles are like tools. With practice using them, you become more skillful. So read the information in this book; discuss the suggested questions with others; do the exercises.<sup>1</sup> You can learn how communication works, and how you can make it work better for you.

<sup>1</sup> You may feel at first that you're getting nothing but a list of new terms. But remember, learning most new information starts with the vocabulary. Once you have names for ideas, you can talk about them, see how they apply to you. To help, we've developed a list of key words at the end of the book. The words and phrases included appear in bold type the first time they are used in text or when they are defined.

## COMMUNICATION: A PROCESS VIEW

In communicating, we stay in touch with the world. Through communication we know the world outside our own skins. As we receive stimuli and interpret them, we communicate with the source of the stimuli and with ourselves. As Ray Birdwhistle points out, "Individuals do not communicate; they engage in or become part of communication."<sup>2</sup> Indeed, each of us receives and interprets stimuli all the time. Hence our talk with other people is part of a larger, ongoing stream of communication activity described as a process. Viewing communication in this way influences all the ideas in this book. So, let's examine what it means to say that communication is a process.



*Each communicator is part of an endless stream of messages.*

<sup>2</sup> *Schizophrenia: An Integrated Approach*, Alfred Auerbach, ed. (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1959), p. 104.

### Process Defined

The word **process** refers to *an ongoing series of interactions among elements that results in something different from the original elements*. For example, film is processed into pictures, wheat into flour; applications are processed; new cars are made in an assembly-line process. In each case, elements interact, creating a new product (result) from the raw materials. In each case, the raw materials (elements) are changed, but nothing is eliminated. As pictures are developed, film is not destroyed. As flour is made, wheat is changed, not eliminated. Information on applications may be transferred to a computer tape and the application form burned, but the information isn't lost, and the paper becomes carbon and gases in the burning. In manufacturing cars, ore is changed from rock to iron to steel to car frames and bodies. Many by-products are created in the process, but nothing is eliminated. The significance of applying this description to communicators is immense.

### Effects of Process

Within any individual communication event, many different elements, human and otherwise, exist and interact. Each element affects the others as part of a series of interactions that began before the specific event and continues long after the event is over. Some of the interactions within communication are repeated regularly and might themselves be thought of as communication processes—or subprocesses. The precise label is less important, however, than remembering that all the parts of communication, whether thought of as elements or subprocesses, are *dynamic* and *interactive*. Each facet of the communication process affects every other facet. No part stands by itself, nor does the end of a communicative interaction between two people mean the communication is over.

Moreover, the events (interactions) in a process do not just happen and then end. Each element or event interacts with and affects other events. In the examples given, a product is created, but the process doesn't end. Products are sold, used, worn out, discarded, recycled, etc. Each interaction in turn creates something new that will also affect other elements—and so on, in a never-ending cycle. Processes are therefore dynamic; they create something new by changing raw materials. And because everything is interrelated, everything affects everything else. The significance of this for communicators is immense.

Recognizing communication as process can significantly affect our approach to talking with others. To think of what we say and do as part of an ongoing, endless *stream* of thought and talk puts it in quite a different light from thinking of it as an event that occurs and is done with. Such a viewpoint helps us remember that our actions (and talk is a form of action) do not occur in isolation. Thinking of communication as process helps us remember that no single word, or series of words, constitutes “a communication.” Whatever we are saying right now is affected by what happened before; our current talk will affect what happens in the future. Keeping that in mind will influence not only what we say, but how we say it.

When we talk, all parts of the communication process happen almost simultaneously—and they interact as they occur. But to study communication, it helps to look at each part in isolation. It is as if we were watching a football game on television, and an instant replay stopped the action at a crucial point in a play. The single-frame picture shows only one part of the action; it does not show the entire play. But using the stop-action camera, which can isolate several parts of the play, helps us understand what happened.

That is what we will do here: We will isolate parts of the communication process. We do this to make the entire process more clear. By understanding the parts, we can better understand how they work together.

## COMMUNICATION ELEMENTS AND PROCESSES

An examination of the parts of the communication process shows that it involves many interrelating subprocesses and elements. At least eight distinct elements are involved: source(s), receiver(s), sensory receptors, message carriers, messages, responses, feedback, and situation or context. Let's look more closely at each of them.

### Source and Receiver

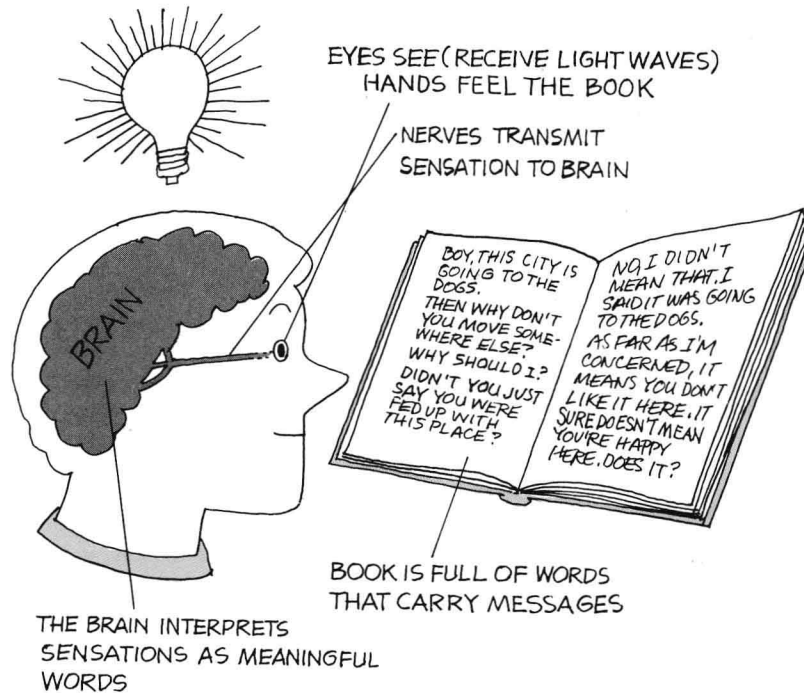
To illustrate the elements, let's look at an example of communication: your reading of this book. The book is the **source**. You are the **receiver**. Your eyes and hands receive sensations that you interpret as meaningful. You see the book, the words and pictures in it, and feel it in your hands. The nerves and muscles of your eyes and hands receive signals and transmit sensations of sight and touch to your brain. That is why you are described as a receiver (see Figure 1-1 on p. 6).

If the communication situation involved a conversation between two people, each person would be a source as well as a receiver. Each would see and hear the other. Each has **sensory receptors**, nerve endings that receive sensations and transmit them to the brain. Thus, *when talking about interpersonal communication, think of each person as both source and receiver.*

Throughout this book, we often describe the people in interpersonal communication as sources and receivers instead of as speakers and listeners. We do that to emphasize that all sensations, not just words, can lead to communication. In the most common types of interpersonal communication, we see people as well as hear them. We learn much from what they look like, how they dress and move, and so on. In addition, people may shake hands or hug one another when they meet, thus communicating through touch. They may wear perfume or cologne, after-shave and deodorants, all sources of information communicated through smell. The nonverbal sources of information in communication are so important that we devote all of Chapter 4 to discussing how people communicate nonverbally.

As you read further in this book, keep in mind that when we use the term *communicator* we usually want you to think of this source/receiver. Some of the suggestions in the book are intended to apply specifically to the communicator as





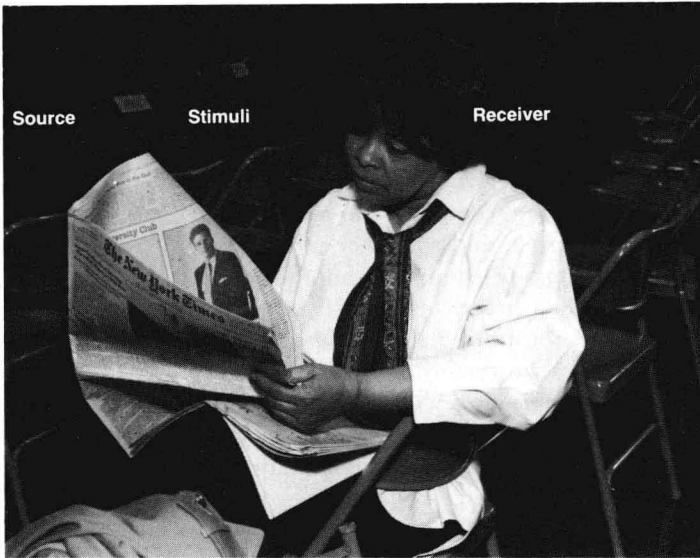
**FIGURE 1-1.** The communication process.

source or sender of messages; some are more important when the communicator is a receiver of messages. But since each communicator is both source and receiver most of the time, the principles apply in both roles. In short, effective communicators are not just effective message sources; they also receive messages accurately and efficiently.

### Messages and Message Carriers

Important elements in communication are the messages. Let's look at two important types: the intended and the perceived. Then we'll look at the medium—message carriers.

**Intended Messages** In interpersonal communication, **intended messages** are *the ideas or feelings a source wants a receiver to understand or know*. Intended messages exist only “in” the source. To be spoken (or written), intended messages must be **coded**. This term describes how language, and perhaps nonverbal messages also, function in communication. To code intended messages, we choose words and sentence structures to express what we want to say. Note the distinction. What a source *wants* to communicate is the intended message; the words are not. *Words merely represent, or stand for, an intended message.*



*The communication process.*

**Perceived Messages** Perceived messages are what receivers **decode** from sensations received. Thus, hearing, seeing, touching, smelling, or tasting alone do not create perceived messages. Decoding is needed as well. A person who hears words receives sensations, but without interpreting (decoding) that person doesn't perceive a message. Decoding is interpreting what is received, giving some meaning to the sensations. If you hear a sound in the next room, your brain must interpret it before you know whether you heard a meaningful sentence, a musical instrument, dishes breaking, or something you don't recognize.

Hearing the word *Аоа* would not lead to a meaningful perceived message unless you knew the code of the Russian language. Instead, your perceived message may be that you are hearing a foreign language, or that the speaker didn't pronounce a word correctly, or that something is wrong with the speaker. Several other interpretations are also possible. The point is that the perceived message is whatever you *interpret*, not the actual words someone has said.

We must make one final point about differences between intended and perceived messages. Often a receiver will perceive messages that a source had no intention of sending. Much information that we get (and respond to) is not intended by any source. Receivers draw conclusions from things that aren't said, from the way a person looks or sounds, or from something that is *not* done. These are perceived messages, even though a source may intend none of them. Unintentional message sending is most true of nonverbal communication but isn't limited to that. Many receivers interpret words differently from the way a source intended. Perceived messages are *whatever meaning a receiver attaches to sensations received*, whether sent intentionally or unintentionally.

If we all remembered and acted on these important distinctions between in-